

COMMANDER JOINT TASK FORCE ONE
USS MT MC KINLEY (AGC 7) Flagship

13 July 1946

MEMORANDUM:

The following dispatches transmitting respectively the preliminary reports on Test ABLE of the President's Evaluation Commission to the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Evaluation Board to the Joint Chiefs of Staff are provided for information. These reports were released in their entirety by the President on 11 July 1946. The texts of the reports given below are complete.

I - REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S EVALUATION COMMISSION:

"Dear Mr. President:

"Your Evaluation Commission, divided between positions at sea and in the air, witnessed the first Bikini Test, at 33 seconds after 9:00 A.M. local time on July 1, and has since completed a survey of the damage. The second test, wherein the bomb will be exploded under the water, will in some respects be of even greater interest, for it will have no precedent. The report of your Commission required by its directive of May 18 must await assembly of considerable data deriving from instrumental and photographic measurements and analysis of fission product samples. However, we believe that it lies within the scope of your directive and may be of possible assistance to you, to submit, now, the following brief observations made from the layman's point of view, but with such accuracy as is presently available:

"The organization and execution of the operation was magnificently handled and has commanded our continuous admiration. The bomb was dropped under favorable weather conditions about thirty seconds after the time set. The greatest credit is due Admiral Blandy and the officers and enlisted personnel of both services who, with scientists and other civilians, have served and are serving under him with a display of team work that must be seen to be fully appreciated.

"Their conservatively safe distance from the burst led many observers to entertain an initial opinion that the bomb employed was somewhat under par. It is now, however, safe to state that the energy was of the same order of magnitude as in the case of previous atomic detonations, between the highest and the lowest of this bomb's three predecessors.

"The accuracy of the drop was such that the explosion occurred within the area included within the allowance for the probable error of the elevation of drop, and detonation was probably within one hundred feet of the chosen altitude. Nevertheless the explosion actually occurred several hundred yards west of a point directly above the target ship Nevada, and therefore entirely west of the closely spaced array of capital ships.

"There were ninety targets anchored in the lagoon when the bomb exploded. These were not in battle formation but were placed in positions to give the largest amount of desired technical information with especially close concentration around the center target point. Those ships anchored a mile or more from the point of drop largely escaped injury. Those within a mile were sunk or suffered damage varying with the distance from the point of detonation

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